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MIGROS Pledges to Support Best Agricultural Practices Standard

Report Categories:

Retail Food Sector

Approved By:

Ralph Gifford, Agricultural Counselor

Prepared By:

Osman Cakiroglu

Report Highlights:

On January 22, 2010 one of the largest retailers in Turkey, MIGROS, announced that it will begin procuring fruits and vegetables only from farmers that adopt the "Good Agricultural Practices" standard, which was created by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

General Information:

On January 22, 2010, MIGROS President of the Board of Directors, Bulend Ozaydinli, and MARA Minister Mehdi Eker announced that MIGROS will be procuring fruits and vegetables only from farmers that practice "İyi Tarım Uygulamaları" (Good Agricultural Practices) standards.

MIGROS has adopted this policy in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA). MARA encourages farmers to partake in the "Good Agricultural Practices" program and has a website where producers can get information on program details. According to MARA currently 5,000 farmers have

signed up for the program. Certified farmers will get 30-90 lira/decare support payments. There are several other types of support available to participants in the program. MARA claims that these standards are the same as GLOBALGAP norms and promote sustainable agricultural practices and traceability. MARA announced that it plans to develop and promote the program and expand its scope to include livestock husbandry and beekeeping.

MIGROS announced that over 2,000 farmers have signed up with program and started production. Producers who signed up with MIGROS will be selling all of their production only to MIGROS. These products will be checked for 236 factors related to food safety, including the use of pesticides and cleanliness of the soil. MIGROS fruits and vegetables will be marked with the “Good Agricultural Practices” logo.

While the “Good Agricultural Practices” program is not new, the MIGROS announcement is. Founded in 1954, MIGROS is a powerhouse in Turkish retailing. It operates 1564 retail stores in Turkey under 4 brands: Migros, Tansas, Sok Macro Center, and 5M. It also operates an online shopping store. Its retail shop concept varies from discount stores (SOK) to premium stores (Macro Center). MIGROS’ market share in the Turkish market is about 25% and according to Deloitte it is one of the top 250 retailers in the world. In addition, MIGROS is the biggest retailer of fruits and vegetables in Turkey. 1kg of every 5kg purchase at MIGROS is fruits and vegetables and its yearly total fruits and vegetable sales is about 270,000 MT. Following the announcement MIGROS has started a TV advertising campaign.

In its bid for European Union accession, Turkey expects to start negotiations on the chapter on “Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy” within the next six months. In recent years, MARA has worked on several food safety projects including; launching a telephone help line on food safety “Alo Gıda 174” (Hello Food 174), requiring prescriptions for the sale of agricultural pesticides, and phasing out the use of methyl bromide in farming. The “Good Agriculture Practices” program is the latest food safety project and can be viewed as an attempt to strengthen the Turkish position on food safety in anticipation of the upcoming EU negotiations.

Post believes that the MIGROS announcement and the launch of its TV advertising campaign will give publicity and a marketing boost to the “Good Agricultural Practices” program and it might help MARA to recover from its hugely unpopular announcement of a new biotech regulation in October 2009.

MARA Good Agricultural Practices Website: <http://iyi.tarim.gov.tr/>

GLOBALGAP Website: <http://www.globalgap.org/>

MIGROS Website: <http://www.migroskurumsal.com/>